

THE RESPONDER

October 2009

Alexandria Fire Department Remembers it Fallen....From Alexandria Times



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On the web!
www.alexandriava.gov/fire

Active and retired public safety officials, elected leaders and residents flocked toward an enormous American flag suspended by the ladders of two Alexandria fire engines last Friday for the Alexandria Fire Department's annual wreath laying at Ivy Hill Cemetery

The solemn ceremony recognized every city firefighter, paramedic and fire marshal — and their counterparts around the country — who has died in the line of duty over the past year and throughout the city's history.

There was no new need this year for the Circle of Honor, which recognizes AFD members who died in the past year. But EMS Supervisor Lisa Jones noted that the rest of the country was not so lucky, having lost 103 members of the fire service community in the past 12 months. Those members were memorialized a week earlier at the National Firefighter's Me-



remembrance of each of the city's 15 fallen members, spanning from Charles Glasscock in 1850 to Louis Farri in 2002, while representatives for each person lost placed a rose in a vase, symbolizing the "roll call of the fallen."

morial in Maryland.

Fire Chief Adam Thiel, who attended the national memorial in Maryland, reflected on those recognized "who, despite their self-sacrifice and dedication to service, these were regular people — but not ordinary people. In fact, these were extraordinary people; just like those in our fire department who, despite long odds and often impossible circumstances, continue to do everything they can to help all of us on our own day of days."

The ceremony was one of many similar ones held across the country for National Fire Prevention week. Alexandria Volunteer Fire Department President Thomas "Jay" Johnson Jr. rang a bell in

Thiel and Johnson then laid the wreath at the stone obelisk dedicated to Alexandria firefighters in 1856 after seven firefighters died fighting an Old Town fire near the waterfront.

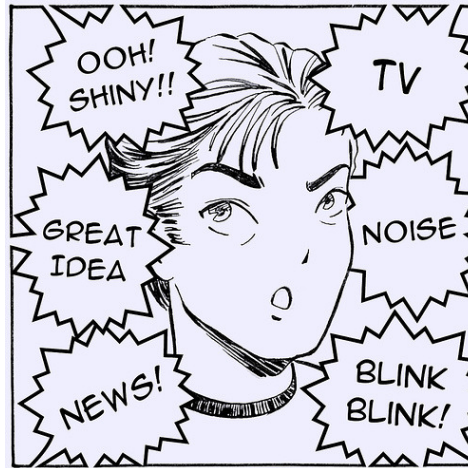
"There's an old saying that once a person decides to become a firefighter, paramedic or fire marshal — or for that matter a police officer or a deputy sheriff — their act of heroism is done; all the rest is simply part of the job," Thiel said. "I disagree. For I believe that true courage can only be displayed after one knows the true risks, knows the true hazards and yet continues to serve day-in, day-out, 24-7, 365."

Get Your Head in the Game....submitted by Captain Merryman

Get your head in the game, Merryman.” That is what I heard from my coach during my short high school basketball playing days. When I got in the game for my limited playing time, my mind was distracted with everything that I was thinking about while sitting on the bench. I wasn’t mentally ready when I was called to perform.

Last month, Kenny Salfelder (T208A) put me in touch with a Safety Specialist from Virginia Power. Dennis and I had a discussion related to the Human Performance side of safety. Virginia Power continues to work on programs that look into factors that distract their employees from their duties thus causing accidents.

Human Performance and its relationship to safety are not new. The Airlines, NASA and the Nuclear Power Facilities have been doing it for years. Imagine getting in the game at a Nuclear Power Facility and the boss (coach) has to yell at you to “get your head in the game” and you have to ask, I released what? Imagine a bad day at NASA; well I guess we don’t have to imagine. Their bad days are shown on



television. Our bad days make the television too.

Do any or all of our members of the department need to have their head in the game? How about those who enforce Fire Codes while carrying side arms, or those who walk through construction sites with all of the related hazards, or our office workers who need to focus while developing support services, or those who receive and dispatch emergency calls or those who repair our apparatus or those who function at Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue or Water Rescue or those who repair and fill our SCBA or

those who administer drugs or those who operate a fire engine or ladder truck. Don’t kid yourself; we all need our head in the game at some point.

Recently, Chief Thiel came to the Health and Safety Unit with a commitment to send the Safety Officers to the National Transportation Safety Board training facility in Ashburn. Our first class was entitled Investigating Human Fatigue Factors. Unfortunately, this class was postponed, but I am positive and excited that we are starting a journey into Human Performance factors. Although a new date for this class has not been set, the HSU is already scheduled for a different class at the NTSB in February.

We all know, at some time, that we all bring distractions to work with us and we all develop distractions while we are at work. I challenge you to take a look at your distractions while you are “sitting on the bench.” See what you can do to minimize your distractions, so when you are called to perform your duties nobody has to remind you to “get your head in the game.”

Tech Rescue Team Prepares for Any Emergency....submitted by Captain Sharpe



Members of the TRT participated in the Capital Shield exercise on October 13, 14, and 15. This years exercise was

a simulated car bombing at federal building. The exercise tested the capabilities of the National Capital areas federal, state and local assets to work together under one command structure at an event that spanned multiple operational periods. Our team was assigned to various operations including

tunneling into a collapsed structure in search of victims, de-layering a debris pile using a crane to pro-

vide access to another collapsed structure; and, shoring an unstable structure to gain access to victims trapped under a roof collapse on the top floor.



Station at Potomac Yard Dedication Ceremony



L-R Councilman Krupicka, Councilman Smedberg, Fire Chief Thiel, Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Donley, Captain McClain and Councilwomen Pepper prepare to perform "Uncoupling Ceremony".

Despite the weather, more than 150 people attended the Dedication Ceremony Saturday, October 17, 2009. The event started at 8:00 a.m., with a station tour by City Council and members of the media. Opening ceremony was performed by the Department's Honor Guard and The Alexandria Pipes and Drums. Fire Chief Thiel

and members of the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation performed a ceremonial hose uncoupling, which signifies the occupancy of the fire house. The inclement weather prevented Fire Department members and Alexandria residents from performing the traditional "pushing" of the apparatus, also known as the "The Housing Cere-



Captain Fair backs engine 202 into new station

mony." This ceremony is a tradition dating back to the 19th century, before the arrival of motorized fire trucks; firefighters with horse-drawn apparatus would unhitch their horses when they returned to the firehouse, then had to push the apparatus back into the station to be ready for the next call.

Spot Light submitted.... by Manny Herrera



Manny Herrera III - Fire Department Human Resource Manager

Manny was born and reared in Tucson, Arizona and a product of 7 siblings many of whom still reside close to the nest in Arizona. (He is the prodigal one). He introduced the seventh generation of Herrera's to the state.

After graduating from the University of Arizona with a BS in Accounting, He joined the US Army and went through their vigorous Officer Candi-

date School to earn his commission. Manny served in the Adjutant General Corps, the military version of HR, and also did some computer programming having developed the first use of the computer for war game simulation.

After 4 years of that fun, He entered the private sector and with the assistance of the GI Bill, earned his MS

in Accounting & Management. He then worked in various industries as a Chief Financial Officer and taught adjunct graduate level on the side in accounting & economics. However, during this phase of his career there was an increasing chasm of job satisfaction to this career path. Manny felt "Work life had to offer something more than simply financial statistics, IT challenges and accounting rules and regulations".

Surprisingly, an opportunity to switch careers availed itself and he becomes an HR guy. Manny said "This opened up a pent up passion to a career move that was inherent to my fiber. I have reached nirvana in the HR profession." He holds a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) designation, which is granted by the HR Certification Institute. He feels his sincerest objective is to deliver the best possible professional service to accommodate our needs.

"My gratifying career has literally taken me from coast to coast; I worked a few years in CA, a few states in between and now I'm in the great state of VA!"

Manny is single and enjoys many personal interests including: hiking, golfing, reading, exploring historical sites and enjoying a good knife and fork on occasion.

Community Outreach



Rescue Engine 206-B participated in the event at Polk Elementary School



Members of the Alexandria Fire Department participated in the National Walk to School Day. The whole month of October, In addition to being Fire Prevention Month, is also known as celebrated as Walk to School Month. The idea of this internationally celebrated event is to promote the health and environmental benefits of walking and bicycling to school.



Engine 202-B, Medic 202-C, and Patsieann Misiti participated in the event at Mt Vernon Elementary School



Farewells



Keith Jochem
Two years of service



Larosa Farmer
Two years of service

Retirements



Chris Leischner
41 Years of Service

September Statistics

| FIRE ALARM HEADQUARTERS CALLS PROCESSED | |
|--|------|
| 911 | 1080 |
| Administration Received | 5298 |
| Administration Dialed | 1846 |
| Dispatched Calls | 1600 |
| Total calls | 8264 |

September Run Stats

| | Unit | EMS | SUP | TOTAL | Current Yr | Previous Yr |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------------|
| Station 201 | E201 | 36 | 70 | 106 | 1,068 | 1,422 |
| Total | | 36 | 70 | 106 | 1,068 | 1,422 |
| Station 202 | E202 | 38 | 61 | 99 | 1,048 | 1,357 |
| | M202 | 121 | 35 | 156 | 1,666 | 2,205 |
| Total | | 159 | 96 | 255 | 2,714 | 3,562 |
| Station 203 | E203 | 38 | 53 | 91 | 923 | 1,265 |
| | T203 | 16 | 71 | 87 | 753 | 954 |
| Total | | 54 | 124 | 178 | 1,676 | 2,219 |
| Station 204 | E204 | 53 | 49 | 102 | 1,007 | 1,319 |
| | T204 | 9 | 94 | 103 | 1,082 | 1,389 |
| Total | | 62 | 143 | 205 | 2,089 | 2,708 |
| Station 205 | E205 | 45 | 98 | 143 | 1,581 | 2,127 |
| | M205 | 199 | 48 | 247 | 2,317 | 2,857 |
| Total | | 244 | 146 | 390 | 3,898 | 4,984 |
| Station 206 | E206 | 66 | 90 | 156 | 1,561 | 1,974 |
| | M206 | 181 | 58 | 239 | 2,161 | 2,806 |
| | R206 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 234 | 534 |
| Total | | 247 | 148 | 395 | 3,956 | 5,314 |
| Station 207 | E207 | 67 | 113 | 180 | 1,654 | 2,230 |
| | M207 | 135 | 24 | 159 | 1,874 | 2,469 |
| Total | | 202 | 137 | 339 | 3,528 | 4,699 |
| Station 208 | E208 | 113 | 126 | 239 | 2,162 | 2,828 |
| | M208 | 184 | 48 | 232 | 2,220 | 2,877 |
| | T208 | 18 | 96 | 114 | 1,042 | 1,366 |
| Total | | 315 | 270 | 585 | 5,424 | 7,071 |
| Station totals | | 1,319 | 1,134 | 2,453 | 24,353 | 31,980 |

HOT SHOTS



Two Alarm fire on Lyons Lane



Venting the roof at 2 alarm fire on Lyons Lane



Callie Terrell sings America the Beautiful at the Ivy Hill Ceremony



E202 extinguishes Vehicle fire on Jefferson Davis Highway



Reggie Rich, and Brandon Kelly pose with a student and Mt Vernon Elementary School Principal Dawn Feltman



Kids from Flagstone receiving fire and life safety tips at station 204